

**MARYLAND GOVERNOR’S COMMISSION ON
HISPANIC AFFAIRS**

Meeting Minutes

Date: Wednesday, November 12, 2008

Time: 7:00 pm – 9:00 pm

Place: University of Salisbury
1101 Camden Avenue
Salisbury, Maryland

Present: Chair Y. Maria Welch, Vice Chair Ricardo Martinez, Elizabeth C. Bellavance, Veronica A. Cool, Mariana Cordier, Lydia Espinosa Crafton, Christina M. Diaz-Malone, Arelis A. Pérez, Nocolas H. Ramos, V

Ex-Officios Present: Susan Spinnato

Absent: Javier G. Bustamante, Ricard V. Cook, Ricardo Alberto Flores, Colonel Roberto L. Hylton, Maria T. Pinto Johnson, Carmen Ortiz Larsen, Elizabeth Ysla leight, Hector G. Manzano, Luisa Montero-Diaz, Sonia E. Mora, Lea Ybarra

Staff Present: Ruby Stemmler, Jessy Mejia, Angela Lagdameo, Agnes M. Smith

Guest Speakers: Dr. Timothy Dunn, Associate professor of Sociology, Salisbury University
D’Andrea Lancelin, Assistant Administrator for Operations, Motor Vehicle Administration
Sean Adgerson, Director of Operations, Motor Vehicle Administration
Michael Mulvin, Manager of Out of Country Programs, Motor Vehicle Administration

I. Call to Order and Greetings

The meeting was called to order at 7:20 p.m. by Chair Y. Maria Welch. Chair Welch introduced herself and welcomed all attending speakers and guests. Chair Welch talked about improving the Hispanic community and empowering the community to interface with all the wonderful things going on in the State of Maryland. We are “One Maryland” as the Governor says. She asked Commissioners to take a moment to introduce themselves and the County they represent.

Chair Welch welcomed Delegate D. Page Elmore who told the Commission that he was looking forward to working with the Commission in the upcoming General Assembly; Kristy Hickman who is a judicial candidate running for judge for the District Court for Somerset County and is currently State's Attorney for the county; County Executive Rick Pollitt, however Jim Fineran, County Public Information Officer apologized for County Executive Pollitt who was unable to stay because of a prior engagement; Wicomico County Sheriff Mike Lewis, however he was unable to attend but 1st Sergeant Tim Robinson informed the Commission that he would be able to answer any questions; Salisbury Police Chief Alan Webster who thanked the Commission for the invitation; Salisbury City Counsel and candidate for re-election Deborah Campbell who thanked the Commission for having her there and look forward to the meeting; Mid-Shore Council on Family Violence Executive Director Jeanne Leoger who welcomed the Commission to the Eastern Shore; Salisbury University for International Education Director Brian Stiegler; Wicomico Neighborhood Congress Chair Jim Ireton; Salisbury University Bellavance Honors Program Class Professor Stephanie Moore asked the Commission to answer her students if they call for the final project; Salisbury Mayor Barrie Tilman said it is a joy to be here; Salisbury University Organization of Latin American Students Professor Dennis; Senator Cardin's Office Ms. Lee Raleigh happy to be here; Community Foundation of Eastern Shore President Spicer Bell spoke about scholarships available on the Eastern Shore for Hispanics; and Seton Center Catholic Charities Sister Ilene Eager who had lunch with Chair Welch who viewed where the Migrant Farm workers lived which was formerly a POW camp for Germans originally.

II. Guest Speakers

Chair Welch asked Vice Chair Ricardo Martinez to advise the community on how the meeting will be conducted. Vice Chair Martinez informed the community that there is a sign-in sheet for individuals who wish to speak.

Dr. Timothy Dunn, Associate Professor of Sociology, Salisbury University “Demographic Survey on Hispanic Community on the Eastern Shore”

Dr. Timothy Dunn spoke about the 2003-2004 Needs Assessment Survey done on the Hispanic community who lived on the Eastern Shore of Maryland. There were 185 Spanish Immigrant participants and 11 focus groups with 90 participants. Overall there were 275 participants for the survey.

The survey revealed that the Hispanic community is a very rapidly growing population. The issues found are language barriers, transportation, lack of papers, low pay and other work problems, crime, lack of health insurance, housing, etc. 20% want English classes; 19% better transportation services, 16% need help with immigration papers/documents, 13% desire better jobs and health services; 6% want Spanish speaking police; 5% need information provided in Spanish.

Over 90% of the Hispanic community on the Eastern Shore have limited or less understanding of English. The public transportation is limited and they receive poor treatment by bus drivers which causes racial tension between riders and drivers. 21% of the survey respondents were victims of crime. 31% do not trust the police enough to report a crime or seek their help. Reasons for lack of trust are scared/fear, language barrier and unsure of how helpful police can be. As far as health services 61% have gone to a hospital, clinic or private doctor. 27% have taken some sort of class. Also, 27% said the children in the household attend public schools. They feel vulnerable at work because they are undocumented. They feel that because of their illegal status, that if they do anything the employer will call the “migra”. 85% are unauthorized immigrants but 2/3 have taxes withheld from pay. 27% have consulate issued ID cards. As far as social support 56% belong to a religious institution and 75% have family/friends in area. The participants said that there is tensions with African Americans and whites ignore them.

The survey revealed that the Hispanic community on the Eastern Shore is new inexperienced immigrants here to stay in this region. They want to learn English, have better transportation, be known for their hard work, and not be isolated from receiving communities.

D’Andrea Lancelin, Assistant Administrator for Operations Motor Vehicle Administration (MVA)

Ms. D’Andrea Lancelin spoke about the meeting last week with the Administration and some of the Commissioners about the process to obtain a license for immigrants. Ms. Lancelin informed the Commission that the Administration brought applications, booklets, etc. for the process to obtain a license for the public. Ms. Lancelin introduced Mr. Michael Mulvin, Manager, Out of Country Programs, Ms. Virginia Colon, District Manager and Sean Adgerson, Director of Operations for the Motor Vehicle Administration (MVA).

Sean Adgerson, Director of Operations, MVA

Mr. Sean Adgerson informed the Commission that since 2005 anyone presenting foreign documents must call and make an appointment to obtain their learners permit, license or ID cards. Appointments will be scheduled at one of the following ten regional MVA offices: Baltimore City, Bel Air, Beltsville, Frederick, Gaithersburg, Glen Burnie, Largo, Salisbury, Waldorf or White Oak. MVA has 19 persons qualified to receive applicants with out of country documents. After making appointment, you will receive a confirmation letter. You must have two primary documents (passport, etc.) and two documents to prove you live in Maryland (leases, bills, etc). If they do not have two primary documents they ask for two secondary documents. It was also noted that MVA has free translation service. You do not have to pay for interpreter services.

MVA has made improvements since 2005. They can make 7,000 appointments over the phone and 1,200 in the office on the spot if the person is missing documents on any given

month. Since October, you can have your documents reviewed, make on-line appointments and they have a bi-lingual call center at the Gaithersburg office. They process about 53% of the applications. The other 47% include 30% that do not show up for appointment and 6% the letters come back.

Mr. Adgerson gave the Commission the Integrity Hotline number 1-800-296-4709. This number is used to report fraud and employee misconduct. There is a poster in every branch with this number on it.

Michael Mulvin, Manager of Out of Country Programs, MVA

Mr. Michael Mulvin informed the Commission that his office reviews the authenticity of documents, driver licenses, etc. Mr. Mulvin trains the document examiners to understand what should be insecure documents and what documents should be accepted to obtain drivers licenses and ID cards.

1st Sergeant Tim Robinson, Sheriff's Office, Wicomico County

1st Sergeant Tim Robinson gave a law enforcement perspective on the issue of obtaining driver permits, licenses and ID cards. First of all they applaud what the MVA is doing in trying to get everyone a license. He feels that everybody who wants a license should have an opportunity to get one. The MVA have a lot of work to do. He spoke about coming across in the community including the immigrant community, forged identification documents. He has personally come across fake and fraudulent resident alien cards, some that are very well made and some poorly made. Law enforcement also looks at having a driver's license as a privilege and not a right.

Angela Lagdameo, Special Assistant to the Chief of Staff Governor's Office of Community Initiatives

Ms. Angela Lagdameo spoke about the Taskforce on the preservation of Heritage Language Skills in Maryland. Ms. Lagdameo spoke about Maryland having over 735,000 individuals (14.5%) speaking another language. Because over 150 languages are spoken in schools by thousands of students, Senator James Rosapepe sponsored Senate Bill 506 to create a Task Force to Study the Preservation of Heritage Languages. This task force will be making recommendations to the Governor by January 2009. They want to ensure that heritage language skills are preserved and identify measures for success. The task force will conduct community outreach, consult with educators, compile data on the number of actual and potential heritage language speakers, collect data on education and culture, study methods of advancing and preserving heritage language skills and consider new cost effective and innovative ways to encourage and facilitate heritage language preservation while encouraging new citizens to master English.

Ms. Lagdameo also spoke about House Bill 1602 which is the Commission to Study the Impact of Immigrants in Maryland. The purpose of this Commission is to study the demographic profile and impact of immigrants on the State, the growth rate of the

immigrant population in the State, the national origins of the State's immigrant population, geographic areas of the State where immigrants reside, etc.

III. Executive Director's Report

Executive Director Ruby Stemmle thanked Ms. Lagdameo who is the point person with issues such as language access and the impact of immigrants on the State. Executive Director Stemmle reported that during Hispanic Heritage Month she attended 42 special events and 9 Hispanic festivals. Thanked all the Commissioners that helped out with delivering proclamations, remarks and giving their time as volunteers helping to cover all of the areas around the State. The highlight of the Hispanic Heritage Month was the Governor's Kick-off Celebration and Reception in Gaithersburg; the Hispanic Heritage Month Awards (400 guests) which is in partnership with the Hispanic Business Conference; and Sisters State Program with delegates from Mexico in partnership with the Secretary of State. Executive Director Stemmle informed the Commission that work is continuing on the website. The website is being updated daily.

Executive Director Stemmle informed the community that the Governor and the State of Maryland Appointments Office, Secretary Jeanne Hitchcock is very committed to increasing members of Hispanics on boards and commissions in the State of Maryland. There are opportunities to serve as volunteers like the Commissioners here tonight. If you are interested in serving please contact the Office at 410-767-7857 or you can go to the website which is: www.hispanic.maryland.gov. Executive Director Stemmle also spoke about the Joint Commissions Assembly scheduled for December 9, 2008 in Annapolis.

IV. Open to Public

Jacqueline Lisjuan spoke about helping Spanish students to go to college. There is a need for more programs so that Spanish students can go to college.

1st Sergeant Robinson spoke about the issue of having more Spanish speaking officers. He has 5 Spanish speaking officers. Sergeant Robinson also noted that Prince George's County Community College has a law enforcement training program.

Ms. Mayra Maldonado, Family Advocate, Early Head Start in Dorchester County, spoke to the Commission about the need to have Spanish speaking employees and translators in health care system. She spoke to them about an incident that involved a 2 year old boy who complained about stomach pains and was taken to Dorchester General Hospital. The incident started around 2:00 p.m. on a Saturday and the parents took him to the hospital around 5:00 p.m. At the hospital neither the triage nurse nor the Emergency Room doctor used the language line or an interpreter. The parents tried to explain the situation but the doctor order chest x-rays. Around 10:00 p.m. the child was discharged with a prescription for an antibiotic for an ear infection. On Sunday the child was still complaining about stomach pains and vomiting and had a fever. The parents took him back and the same thing happened. The triage nurse and the doctor both spoke

to the parents in English and did not use the language line or an interpreter. This time the doctor ordered x-rays on the child's belly. However, the doctor that saw the child on Saturday came with a nebulizer machine and inhaler and instructed the parents to keep up the antibiotic and to bring the child to the doctor's office on Monday. The parents called the doctor's office on Monday to be told they had to schedule for some other time. The parents watched their child deteriorate before them. They took the child back to the Emergency Room and the doctor they saw on Sunday came with another doctor and an interpreter. After the parents explained what happened through an interpreter, more x-rays were ordered. The doctor apologized to the parents and had to transfer the child to Baltimore because Dorchester General Hospital was not equipped to handle the situation. The child was taken to University of Maryland Hospital and was in intensive care for three days, and had two surgeries. This could have been avoided or taken care of quicker if the hospital personnel used the language line, interpreter, etc. There is a great need for Spanish speaking employees and translators in the health care system. The Spanish speaking population in Maryland is growing and there is a need to accommodate this community to avoid situations like this.

Sister Agnes Oman, Hispanic Ministry office Diocese of Wilmington, Salisbury MD, spoke about the concern about the lack of adequate interpretive services for limited English speakers at the local hospital, the largest hospital between Norfolk VA and Annapolis MD thus serving a large Hispanic population on the Eastern Shore.

Sister Oman spoke about some instances that she experienced helping those with limited English proficiency. Sister Oman believes that if the hospital can afford to expand their services in some areas, they should be able to provide an interpreter who is properly certified to assist patients with limited English proficiency. Translation services are needed in the hospital.

Chair Welch thanked the University of Salisbury for allowing the Commission to have the meeting here. Chair Welch thanked the community for their concerns and support. The Commission will continue to respond to the concerns of the community with the help of the Governor's office.

The meeting was adjourned at 9:15 p.m.